

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SSM-03 AF-10 SAA-03 /106 W
-----115080 012045Z /61

R 300828Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8494
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3633

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MASS, IS, LE
SUBJ: SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH
NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR

1. NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR TANCRED IBSEN WHO IS RESIDENT IN
CAIRO CALLED JUNE 29 FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND DIS-
CUSSION HIS CONVERSATIONS IN BEIRUT, DAMASCUS AND SOUTH
LEBANON DURING PAST WEEK. FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST
EMERGED.

2. ARAFAT. ALTHOUGH NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT STILL DID NOT
RECOGNIZE PLO, IBSEN HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO MEET WITH ARAFAT
BECAUSE OF THE FREQUENT CONTACTS NORWEGIANS WERE OF NECESSITY
HAVING WITH PALESTINIANS. HE HAD SEEN HIM JUNE 28. ARAFAT
HAD SAID PLO WAS CONVINCED THAT COOPERATION WITH UNIFIL WAS
IN ITS BEST INTEREST. HE MAINTAINED THAT U.S. COLLUDED WITH
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ISRAEL IN ITS ATTACK ON LEBANON AND THAT UNIFIL HAD BEEN
IMPOSED ON AMERICANS BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THEREFORE
IT WAS A GOOD THING. IBSEN POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT WE HAD
BEEN PRIME MOVERS IN PRODUCING UNIFIL BUT HE WAS NOT CLEAR AS
TO WHETHER THIS HAD REGISTERED WITH ARAFAT. IN ANY EVENT
ARAFAT SAID PLO WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH UNIFIL. IBSEN
HAD IMPRESSION BOTH SYRIANS AND PLO REALIZE SERIOUSNESS OF

STRATEGIC SITUATION WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM ISRAEL BEING IN
OCCUPATION OF SOUTH BEKAA AND THEREFORE FEEL INTERPOSITION OF
UNIFIL IS GOOD THING FOR THEM.

3. SYRIANS. IBSEN HAD MET WITH KHADDAM AND PRIME MINISTER
HALABI IN DAMASCUS. HE FOUND KHADDAM VERY ILL-INFORMED ABOUT
THE WORLD AND SAID FACT THAT KHADDAM COULD COMMUNICATE IN NO
LANGUAGE EXCEPT ARABIC DEPRIVED HIM OF A GREAT DEAL OF INFOR-
MATION HE SHOULD HAVE. HALABI, WHOM HE HAD KNOWN FOR PAST
SEVEN YEARS, HAD BEEN MUCH MORE FORTHCOMING AND HAD SAID
SYRIANS INTENDED TO MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO MAINTAIN
STABILITY AND UNITY IN LEBANON. THEY WERE PREPARED SEND
ADDITIONAL FORCES IF NECESSARY. HALABI HAD INDICATED CONSI-
DERABLE UNHAPPINESS WITH LEBANESE LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, AND
WITH LEBANON IN GENERAL.

4. NORBATT. THE NORWEGIAN BATTALION WAS GETTING ALONG PRETTY
WELL. THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE PALESTINIANS HAD IMPROVED
AND LATTER WERE SHOWING CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT, PRESUMABLY
UNDER ORDERS FROM HEADQUARTERS. THEY ALSO HAD CONTACT WITH
SAAH HADDAD BUT HAD NOT SEEN MUCH OF HIM. ON TWO OCCASIONS
HADDAD HAD CALLED UP TO TELL THEM HE WAS ABOUT TO FIRE OVER
THEIR HEADS AT SOME TARGET BEYOND THEM AND THEN HAD PROCEEDED
TO DO SO. IBSEN SAID NORWEGIANS HAD IMPRESSION THAT ALTHOUGH
HADDAD WAS AN ALLY OF ISRAELIS AND DEPENDED ON THEM, HE ALSO
WAS A MAN OF SOME INTEGRITY AND WAS NOT COMPLETELY UNDER
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THEIR CONTROL. THERE WERE LIMITS AS TO HOW FAR HE WOULD GO
IN FOLLOWING THEIR ORDERS IF THOSE ORDERS CLASHED WITH WHAT
HE PERCEIVED AS HIS OWN INTERESTS.

5. ASSAD'S HEALTH. IBSEN HAD BEEN TOLD BY CABINET OFFICER
IN SYRIA THAT ASSAD WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE CANCER.
PARKER

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NNN

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